

# Partnerships and Resource Mobilization



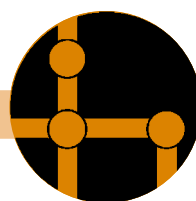
Access



Content



Diversity



Infrastructure



Literacy

**Problems are** more likely to be solved when people work together, each contributing their unique expertise and unique set of resources to create a more powerful whole.

With this in mind, our community wanted to know how well segments of the city work together to develop a technology healthy community. To what degree have the private, public, educational and nonprofit sectors partnered? Are they strategically leveraging each others' resources towards closing the digital divide? What contribution does the information technology industry make to our city's community development? These questions led us to establish partnerships and resource mobilization indicators.

Unfortunately when we sought measures for these indicators, we were not able to collect sufficient data. However the concept is important and so merited some discussion and a placeholder for future data.

## Private Sector Contributions

We know the private IT sector contributes time, materials and cash to community services, including activities which apply information technology to address social needs and help close the digital divide. In our initial project discussions, representatives of the Technology Alliance, WSA (Washington Software Alliance), educational institutions, community technology centers, the City of Seattle and others wanted to measure and recognize the tremendous value of these contributions by the information technology industry and individual IT professionals. Unfortunately, we found that while some individual companies could provide data on their corporate donations, there was no collective industry data available.

### Measurement

Average number of volunteer hours contributed at each of six community technology centers in 2001<sup>1</sup>

496



**Volunteers contribute a significant number of hours to community technology centers.**

IT volunteers can bring needed skills and passion to an organization. For instance, Project Compute is a community technology center project at the Rainier Community Center that relies almost entirely on volunteers to teach basic and advanced computing projects to youth, adults and senior citizens. Black Data Processing Associates is a national organization of professional volunteers who provide mentorship and create exciting learning opportunities for youth. Days of service by Microsoft and others bring teams out into needy communities. Volunteers enable NPower to provide a

tech check-up day for non-profits. Corporate volunteer projects and policies enabling paid release time create community capital and provide meaningful experiences for employees.

For these reasons, we sought to identify the number of IT companies that promote employee volunteerism and support it through paid release time. We found that this information has not been previously assembled and we were not able to reasonably gather the data for this report. However the question is going to be asked on future City of Seattle business surveys. Since our ability to collect this data is limited, we also strongly encourage the industry and professional associations to measure and publicize the value and impact of their contributions.

*Every year a new study comes out about the digital divide, and every year it says it is getting worse. We all know it's there. It's getting worse because we keep talking about it, and very few people are doing anything about it. This doesn't mean that you all need to quit your jobs and start a non-profit. It does mean that you need to carve out a few hours a year of your time to give. If everyone does that we could make a real impact on our youth. If everyone put a drop in the bucket, we could fill the bucket.*

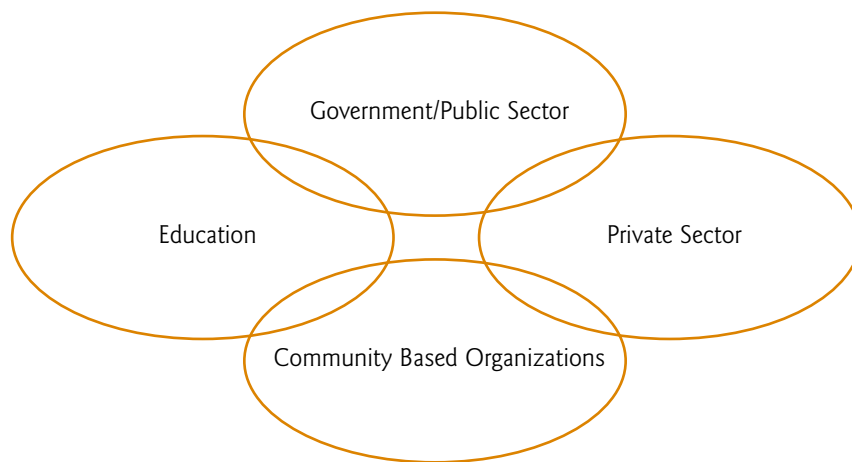
—Trish Millines Dziko, Technology Access Foundation

## Partnerships

*Partnerships and strategic alliances contribute greatly to success in the corporate sector. The same benefits can be applied to developing the elements of a technology healthy community—fostering IT literacy and job training, attracting and retaining high tech business, ensuring access for all, and building a community IT infrastructure. Long-term partnerships and strategic alliances are especially critical for sustainability in tough economic times.*

An index of partnerships would provide a measure of strategic use of resources. It could also provide a profile of our city's ability to attract federal funds and other investments in technology healthy development. However we found the same challenge here as we did trying to measure volunteerism; this is acknowledged

as important but has not previously tracked in any collective manner. Additional research that the City of Seattle is conducting on sustainable community technology centers will provide some data, but we are left to encourage future data gathering in this arena.



### Partnership Profile: Seattle Jobs Initiative

The Seattle Jobs Initiative is a public private partnership formed to place low-income city residents in living wage jobs, support their retention and upward mobility and contribute to regional competitiveness by supplying employers with qualified workers and improving workforce development systems.<sup>2</sup> SJI initiated a high tech training program, starting with web content developers and designers, in 2001. The Seattle Jobs Initiative is made possible through a network of 31 partners. This includes 11 investing organizations, 6 training partners, 3 industry associations, and 11 community based organizations.



## Partnership Profile: Seattle Community Technology Alliance

The Seattle Community Technology Alliance (SCTA) was created to link low-income and disadvantaged people to technology resources that increase their opportunities for lifelong learning, civic participation and access to cultural and community services.<sup>3</sup> The SCTA focused on development of community technology centers located in a variety of community centers, housing developments, schools and community based organizations. Seven sites were initially included. Each had great ideas and energy behind them, but did not have the leverage on their own to mobilize the resources needed to create sustainable programs. The project partners have included four diverse community based organizations, the Seattle Public Library and City of Seattle Department of Information Technology as well as the Parks and Recreation department, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Housing Authority, the Seattle Community College District, University of Washington and five corporate partners, including Microsoft, Gateway, Millennium Digital Media, Cisco and AT&T Broadband. Together these partners committed \$1.5 million dollars to match a \$900,000 three-year grant received from the US Department of Education.

As a result of the resources brought together, SCTA community technology centers at seven sites were able to serve well over 3,000 users in 2001. The Seattle Community Technology Alliance and member community technology centers have also partnered with other organizations for job training services, youth tutoring, volunteer management training and other program activities. Each of these linkages supports the work of the partnering entity. The networking helps strengthen the capacity of participating community technology sites to be effective as individual business units and as a force for strategic and coordinated community technology and economic development. The SCTA has information measuring some of the impact of the work accomplished through these partnerships. Still, capturing the full impact of the partnership and benefits to future partners continues to be challenging for the organization.

The initial SCTA development project focused on a limited set of centers. In 2002, the partnerships and structure of the Alliance are being revisited as the Alliance moves past its initial funding commitments. Furthermore, other potential partners expressed interest in participating. The tracking of who participates over time and its impact could provide an indicator of the organization's effectiveness, community technology needs and the priorities of participating companies, organizations and government entities. This could be done in part by a measure of revenue generated by community technology centers (CTC's) through private donations, corporate donations, government funding, and earned income as determined by survey of CTC's.

## Notes

1. Daria Cal, *Seattle Community Technology Alliance 2nd Year Performance Report*.
2. <http://www.cityofseattle.net/oed/sji/>
3. <http://www.cityofseattle.net/tech/scta/>